

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 4987

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: CAMPAIGN RESUMES AFTER EASTER
BREAK

REF: MANILA 4893

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT'S KBL PARTY MOVED ITS CAMPAIGN INTO A HIGHER GEAR FOLLOWING THE REQUIRED EASTER RECESS, BUT NO NEW ISSUES HAVE BEEN RAISED. PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS ARE CONTINUING THEIR CHARGES OF FOREIGN "MEDDLING" IN THE ELECTIONS. POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO RIG VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN HIT BY THE OPPOSITION, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS BACKED DOWN SLIGHTLY. THE INFLUENTIAL IGLESIA NI KRISTO CHURCH HAS REPORTEDLY THROWN ITS 300,000 VOTES TO THE KBL. END SUMMARY.

2. ATMOSPHERICS. DURING THE STATUTORY EASTER WEEKEND PAUSE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR THE INTERIM LEGISLATURE (IBP), METRO MANILA (EXCEPT FOR THE FOREIGN TOURIST BELT ALONG ROXAS BLVD.) WAS LITERALLY PAPERED-OVER WITH FULL-COLOR POSTERS FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S KBL PARTY, AND KBL TELEVISION SPOTS ARE NOW BEING BROADCAST FREQUENTLY. PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS ALSO APPEARED SEVERAL TIMES ON TELEVISION. OPPOSITION LABAN SPOKESMAN
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ROCES REPORTEDLY SAID MARCH 28 THAT THE LABAN WOULD ACCEPT THE KBL'S CHOICE OF THE MARCOS-APPOINTED COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) AS ARBITER OF THE MUCH-POSTPONED "PRINT DEBATE" ON NATIONAL ISSUES (REFTEL); OCCASIONAL TELEVISED DEBATES BETWEEN LABAN AND KBL CANDIDATES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RESUMED AFTER SOME WERE CANCELLED DURING EASTER WEEK. OTHER EVENTS THIS WEEK,

WHICH APPEAR TO BE RELATED TO THE ELECTIONS, INCLUDE:
A GRENADE WAS TOSSED AT THE PRESIDENTIAL RETREAT IN BAGUIO, AND EXPLOSIVES WERE FOUND INSIDE THE MANSION (MANILA 4805); 2,000 MUSLIM REBELS FORMALLY SURRENDERED AND WERE GIVEN AMNESTY BY MARCOS; AND THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THAT 15,000 NEW TEACHING JOBS WOULD BE CREATED, MALE TEACHERS WOULD BE GIVEN CLOTHING ALLOWANCES FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND 40 MILLION PESOS IN NEW SCHOLARSHIPS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO NEEDY STUDENTS.

3. FOREIGN ISSUES. IN ADDITION TO MARCOS' TV STATEMENT ABOUT FOREIGN INTERVENTION (MANILA 4971) BOTH COMELEC AND MRS. MARCOS HAVE HAD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT FOREIGN ISSUES. COMELEC MARCH 22 DEPUTIZED THE COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION TO FERRET OUT VIOLATORS OF THE ELECTION CODE'S BAN ON FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE ELECTIONS. (A DAILY EXPRESS CARTOON THE NEXT DAY (MAUDY THURSDAY) SHOWED AN EVIL-LOOKING OPPOSITION CANDIDATE HOLDING 30 PIECES OF SILVER.) MRS. MARCOS HAS CONCERNED HEAVILY ON ANTI-FOREIGN THEMES IN HER APPEARANCES, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF U.S. MILITARY BASES. CALLING THE USG "FOREIGN SQUATTERS," SHE INSISTED ON PAYMENT OF RENTAL FOR THE USE OF THE BASES: "WITHOUT RENT, THE BELIEF IS THAT THE LAND IS THEIRS."

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4. REGISTRATION DEBATE. ON MARCH 25 PRESIDENT MARCOS URGED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO NORMALLY RETURN TO THEIR HOME PROVINCES ON ELECTION DAY TO VOTE INSTEAD IN METRO MANILA, WHERE THE REAL CONTEST IS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, COMELEC ANNOUNCED IT WAS EXTENDING VOTER REGISTRATION TO APRIL 5 (THE ELECTION CODE SAYS REGISTRATION SHOULD END TEN DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION UNLESS COMELEC PERCEIVES SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES). THE FOLLOWING DAY, LABAN SPOKESMAN ROCES COMPLAINED: "OI AM AFRAID THAT THIS SUPPOSED REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE VOTED IN THE PROVINCES IS LIKE SOME BUILT-IN EXPLANATION IN CASE THE NUMBER OF VOTES COUNTED SHOULD FAR EXCEED THE NORMAL VOTING POPULATION OF METRO MANILA." ON MARCH 28 COMELEC BACKED OFF SLIGHTLY, CHANGING THE LAST DAY OF REGISTRATION TO APRIL 3. LABAN HAS NOW PETITIONED SUPREME COURT TO REMOVE FROM LISTS ALL REGISTRATIONS AFTER ORIGINAL 3/28 DEADLINE.

5. IGLESIA NI KRISTO (INK) SUPPORT. CITING EARLIER REPORTS THAT THE FUNDAMENTALIST INK CHURCH WOULD SUPPORT 19 KBL AND 2 LABAN CANDIDATES, BULLETIN TODAY COLUMNIST BIGNORIA SAID MARCH 24 THE INK'S PATRIARCH

HAS SWITCHED TO FULL SUPPORT OF THE KBL SLATE AFTER
" A VERY HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL" SHOWED HIM
"A VOLUMINOUS ARRAY" OF EVIDENCE AGAINST "ONE OF THE
LABAN CANDIDATES." THE INK IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE FIRM
CONTROL OVER THE VOTES OF 300,000 ADHERENTS IN METRO
MANILA.
NEWSOM

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